RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

FEBRUARY 1986 232 Ogden Avenue — Jersey City, N.J. 07307 — (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL.

RNA: THE YEAR-END REPORT

Riverview Neighborhood Association is now one year old. It is perhaps appropriate that we as an organization take a look at our progress during this past year.

1985 was a year of growth. At the end of 1984 a group of concerned friends and neighbors gathered to form an association dedicated to protect, secure and improve the quality of their lives in the Heights of Jersey City. Riverview Neighborhood Association is now a thriving organization of approximately 125 active members that meets every month.

RNA elected its first executive committee with Vito Brunetti as chairperson, Bob Lewis as vice-chairperson, Ellen Boggs as secretary, and Richard LaPosta as treasurer (who replaced Ed Lortz when he moved to San Francisco). It is their job to direct the daily running of the group and represent RNA to the city and local community. RNA then created a group of standing committees: Community Awareness, Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Traffic, Crime Watch and Sanitation to oversee the specific concerns of the neighborhood.

1985 was a year of accomplishments. There were many issues that were discussed and voted on by the membership. The reversing of the street direction on Ogden Avenue from north to southbound has proved to be a success in terms of safety and traffic control.

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MAYOR, COUNCILMEN SPEAK AT RNA

At RNA's November 12th meeting special guests included Councilman-at-large Chester Kaminski, Councilmen Buddy Brooks and Tom Hart, and Mayor Anthony Cucci.

Tom Hart was the first to address the group, reporting on the success of Heights Pride Week, the Community Education Program at School No. 8 and various special holiday events.

The late Buddy Brooks, who was working closely with RNA on the Mountain Road repair and reopening, reported on his findings and plans at that time. Unfortunately, with Mr. Brooks' tragic death, this project is up in the air now.

Chester Kaminski, in his first presentation to RNA, spoke on a range of issues including the Newport City development which he felt is good for Jersey City although "in no way do we want to cut out all the other aspects of people that live here." To this end, he said, a portion of the Newport City project is devoted to low and moderate income housing. There was criticism on the tax abatement from Ted Conrad and Mr. Conrad also criticized the short time spent evaluating the effects of this abatement which will be granted for 40 years. Mr. Conrad also noted that the model of the project was only displayed in N.Y. and not in N.J. where we could see it. Mr. Kaminski responded that the vote on the abatement was a difficult one and while he was against it at the outset, he came to support it because he felt it is in our best interest to have this development and the low cost units it will provide. As for the model,

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YEAR-END REPORT

Believing that it is necessary to acquaint our members with all aspects of an issue before a vote can be taken, RNA set up two public forums concerning problem areas in our neighborhood. In the spring, we organized a two-part Forum on Mountain Road. After hearing from city officials and neighbors, RNA formally voted to reopen the Road. (At this time, the Road will be reopened in the spring of 1986.)

The second forum was organized in the fall around the status of Riverview Park, with participants including city officials, local leaders and other neighborhood associations. (Meetings are scheduled to develop a renovation plan for presentation to the city in the spring.) RNA was also instrumental in organizing a debate for the council seat in Ward D to allow the voters the opportunity to hear the candidates discuss the issues.

Realizing our responsibility to oversee new development, our Planning and Development Committee met with developers and builders to discuss and if necessary modify their plans to conform to our neighborhood zoning. To improve safety and security for everybody, RNA set up a crimewatch plan for the neighborhood and is working with the local police to decrease crime. RNA also organized a highly successful flea market and a bus trip to Atlantic City. Both social events are to be rescheduled in 1986 because of their immense popularity. Perhaps the shining acheivement of RNA this year, has been the publishing of this monthly newsletter for the purpose of informing the neighborhood of the events and plans of the group.

1985 was also a year of promise. In this regard, RNA plans to continue all the projects started last year to improve the quality of our neighborhood. 1986 will be the beginning of new projects: the adoption of a formal constitution, the focus on Palisades Avenue and the reaching out to other neighborhood associations for mutual projects locally and citywide.

All in all, 1985 has been a successful beginning for RNA. The potential has been realized but the challenge remains. We as a group are a unique combination of young and old, male and female, liberal and conservative. We are constantly disagreeing with each other on many of the decisions to be made by RNA. But that is the way it should be when those decisions made will effect the future of our lives.

Before ending this report, thanks are due to all the people: city officials, local merchants and the local press who were helpful and responsive to RNA's needs and concerns. But the largest thanks go to our people themselves who make up RNA and devote their time and energy each month to the future of our neighborhood.

VITO BRUNETTI

FLEA MARKET TIME

Remember the beautiful spring day, good food, seeing our neighbors and making money? Well it's time to start making plans for our Second Annual Flea Market on May 3. I know it's going to be another big success. So don't miss our next newsletter for more details.

Carin Lewis

REMEMBER: NEXT RNA MEETING
TUES. FEB. 11th 7:00 P.M.
HARBORVIEW - 2nd FL.

RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

MAYOR, COUNCILMEN SPEAK

Mr. Kaminski hoped it would be displayed in J.C. City Hall. Mr. Conrad brought up several other problems, including automobile parking, traffic congestion, lack of commuter services and other types of service needs for a heavy influx of people--problems which are not being addressed.

Tom Hart, entering a dialogue with Mr. Conrad, stated that J.C. will still be earning ample tax income from this development and it is a way J.C. can obtain nice housing with guaranteed financing. He said the City will get loan money back with interest, plus get the waterfront developed, plus get the infrastructure built.

Mr. Conrad, still concerned about population density, stated "We're in Jersey City because we don't want the density of Madison Avenue".

Other issues were brought to Kaminski by RNA members, including transit facilities and the need for expansion of them, sanitation, sewage treatment, the need for more mail boxes in our area, fixing of potholes, reservoir capacity, etc.

Mayor Cucci, who arrived late due to an extended meeting about solid waste recovery, proceeded to summarize the first 4 months of his administration. He cited some problems inherited from the previous administration and some projects which were already begun, including Newport City. He said he has tried to make the best of what was already started without compromising his principles or making potential builders see him as anti-development. He has tried to encourage business to come to J.C. to increase jobs and spur the economy while trying to minimize displacement of people.

Mayor Cucci admitted that in some areas definitive plans to address old problems and new ones created by development have not been made although he considers this important. One of these areas is transportation. Ted Conrad interjected that the use of rail systems is feasible yet planners are concentrating on private cars. Mayor Cucci invited Mr. Conrad's input on this issue.

Frank Santoro questioned the Mayor about road closings, specifically Mountain Road and Holland Street in our area, and the ensuing traffic grid-lock he feels has been caused by the closings. The Mayor agreed that preservation of unique roads and structures is desirable but felt that the cost must be weighted against the benefits. In the case of Mountain Road he felt that 24-hour policing (3 shifts) would be required to stop the dumping, car-stripping and crime on that road and the cost is prohibitive. We must be practical, the Mayor added.

Mayor Cucci also mentioned that building a sports stadium in J.C. may be out of the question since New York will not allow another franchise within 50 miles. He prefers not using J.C. land for a stadium when it could be used to create jobs in the Enterprise Zone.

Several other issues brought up by RNA members were discussed by the Mayor. He ended his talk by urging us to continue to give our input to the government via the City Council and expressed a desire to return to RNA.

Edith Springer

BITS AND PIECES

God did not create woman from
Man's head, that he should
command her
Nor from his feet, that she
should be his slave,
But rather from his side,
That she should be near his heart

Submitted by Maria Tuzzo

RIVERVIEW PARK FORUM

After months of preparation, coordinating and planning, RNA held its forum on Riverview Park on December 10th at School No. 8.

The purpose of the forum was to discuss with the community the history, present status, problems, solutions and long range plans for Riverview Park.

From this forum, RNA hoped to gather a consensus from the community to present to the City, for the long overdue renovation of the park.

We printed up and handed out approximately 300 flyers announcing the forum. Not counting the panel, about 50 people attended. It was a busy time of the year and the weather wasn't ideal, but we were hoping more people would have cared enough to come and participate.

I know there are more people who care about Riverview Park and could not attend. I still want to hear from you. If you haven't filled out a questionnaire but want your opinions on the future of the park to be heard, contact the RNA at the number on the newsletter or me at 963-5107 and I'll see that you get a questionnaire.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who attended, Bob Lewis for moderating, Vito Brunetti for his leadership, persistance and slide presentation, the RNA Parks Committee and the panel: Richard Brown, Heights Neighborhood Housing Services; Robert Cotter, Division of Urban Research and Design, HED; Captain Galvin, North District, Police Department; Sgt. T. Schieder, Commander, Quality of Life Unit, J.C.P.D; Richard Wolowicz, Forestry Division, D.P.W.

A special thanks to the rest of the panel: Theodore Conrad, Friends of Historic Riverview Park; Bernadette O'Reilly-Lando, Councilwoman; Joan Earls, Division of Leisure Activities, D.P.W.; Ted Flach, Neighborhood Improvement Committee; Steve Garibaldi, Ogden Avenue Block Association; Tom Hart, Councilman, Ward D.

These people have been active in the Heights and Jersey City for years and have always tried their best to improve the quality of life for us all.

Chuck Hollowell
Chairperson, RNA
Parks & Recreation
Committee.

PARK FORUM

OGDEN AVENUE TRAFFIC

While the redirecting of traffic may have helped to clear up the problem of speeders on Ogden Avenue, it may have created another problem. Ferry Street is now being illegally used as a two-way street. If, in the campaign to change the traffic from north to south on Ogden, plans had been included to change the direction of Ferry Street and Wood Place we would not now have this problem on Ferry Street. In fact, if Ferry Street traffic went west and Wood Place traffic went east, we would have one street in and one street out for each of the blocks involved.

Perhaps in the future any plans taken up by the neighborhood should include more extensive research into all aspects of the situation. We may then eliminate this kind of problem from happening again.

Maria Tuzzo

IN MEMORIUM [redacted]

Last December, Councilman Jos. "Buddy" Brooks passed away. He was the representative of Ward C, in which part of our association is located. For the short time, RNA knew Mr. Brooks, we were impressed with his concern and responsiveness to our needs.

Immersing himself in the issue of our Mountain Road, Mr. Brooks listened to all sides of the problem and then proceeded to work towards the reopening of the Road by the spring of 1986.

Not being a one-issue representative, he defended his position on rent control and explained his views on development and police effectiveness. A down-to-earth man, he was always comfortable in front of our group ready with a funny joke or a comment to put an issue in its proper perspective.

Riverview Neighborhood Association will miss Buddy Brooks not only for the job he was doing but more importantly, for his potential that will not be achieved.

(Note: Jorge Aviles was chosen by the Mayor and the Council to succeed Mr. Brooks for the Ward C council seat. Mr. Aviles will be a guest speaker at RNA's March meeting.)

VALENTINE GREETINGS

I searched the card stores far
and then
I searched them all right back
again
To see if there could e'er be
found
A card platonic yet profound
But all of them were far too sweet
For folks like us who chance to
meet
And so I penned this simple rhyme
To wish you a HAPPY VALENTINE

Maria Tuzzo

RNA ANNUAL ELECTIONS

The annual elections for the 1986 officers of the RNA executive committee will be held at our Feb. 11th meeting. Nominations for the positions of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer were opened at the January meeting and will stay open till the February meeting.

Thus far nominations are as follows:

CHAIR: Vito Brunetti
Bob Lewis
Ellen Boggs

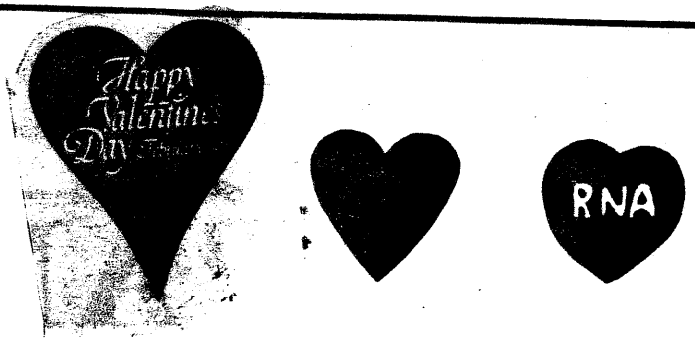
VICE-CHAIR: Ted Conrad
Bob Lewis
Dean Howell

SECRETARY: Maria Tuzzo
Raquel Sweeny

TREASURER: Rich LaPosta
Karen Funk

All RNA members are eligible to run for these offices. A person can be nominated by another person or themselves. The nomination must be confirmed by a second member. The only qualification is that the person live within the association's boundaries of Ogden and Palisade Avenues between Bowers Street and Cuneo Place.

Please come and vote for your choice for these offices. Please come and vote for your neighborhood on February 11th.



"I LOVE TO TALK ABOUT TRAINS"

"'Lionel', Ives, Marx, American Flyer"--do those names ring a bell--that's right, electric trains. No Christmas was complete without a train running under the tree. Alas, those days are gone. Today's kids want GI Joe or Masters of the Universe or a home computer. But Dad--he still wants trains. Contrary to popular belief, Lionel and American Flyer trains are still being manufactured, although not by the original companies. The older trains are now collectable and a set of mid-fifties vintage can go from $25 to $2,000, depending on type and condition.

Whether you have the older ones or would like a set of new ones, the prices, surprisingly, are comparable. A mid-fifties set of medium priced trains (steam engine, tender, 4 or 5 cars, transformer and track in good condition) costs $250 now ($60 then). A set of brand new trains runs $200-$300--surprised? The new trains are actually cheaper than the old trains, if you calculate in inflation. Most old trains haven't really gained in value, just kept pace with inflation and prices in general, but there are exceptions and several sets can command prices in excess of $600, but these are rare.

Today's trains are just as good or better than yesterdays, due to better technology and use of lighter weight materials. They should last forever, like the old ones, if taken care of properly. Thankfully, some of the trains I received as a child were saved from destruction by my parents, but some were not; and I still have not been able to replace all my original set. Speaking of care, if you have a set of trains, regardless of age, and they haven't been used for a few years, please don't run them without first giving them a through oiling and lubrication. That expensive engine will be a

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pile of usuable parts if the grease has hardened and the oil evaporated.

Do you still have that set of trains in the attic or did you give them away? Would you like to sell them? Do you want to know their value? Do you just want more information about the hobby in general, give me a call or see me at the next meeting, I love to talk about trains.

Bob Lewis

ATLANTIC CITY TRIP PLANNED

RNA has made tentative plans for a spring bus ride to Atlantic City. The day selected for the event is April 20th. Further details will be given at the regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the Harbor View Health Care Center. Remember that it is first come, first served when accomodating members for seats on the bus. Mike Cioffi is organizing the trip. He can be reached in person at the monthly meeting, or at 792-4595.

Maria Tuzzo

NEWPORT CITY SNAFU

(The following is a letter by Theodore Conrad reprinted from the Jersey Journal on Tuesday, January 28, 1986.)

When Gilmcher first proposed the $2 billion New Port City project it was to have a shopping mall and low rise housing to look like a part of the Hamilton Park Historic District and not cost the city a dime.

At a recent council meeting to approve the project the price jumped to $10 billion without even an explanation. It was approved in two hours without showing any plans or a model, which was kept under wraps in New York and all at a time when the city lost most of its engineering staff. The new design, it now turns out, will be like a chuck of midtown Manhattan with 85-story buildings dumped into Jersey City.

With Lefrak and Simon now at the helm they were able to get a $40 million CDBG grant and a $139 million low interest loan from HUD.

Now these big time developers listed among the 400 wealthiest in the country by Forbes magazine claim they need another Fox Lance tax abatement for their shopping mall which has direct subway connection to Up and Downtown New York, Journal Square and Newark. For these kinds of breaks we could have gotten our local contractors to build the project using local help. We have no guarantee that the 5,000 jobs promised will go to Jersey City workers.

With plans as dense as Mid Manhattan where pedestrians are forced to walk in the gutter, we find Path cars having the configeration of their seats altered to accomodate more standing room for passengers. All this at a time before Harborside or Evertrust are completed and not even a brick has been laid in New-Port City. Plus some 50 story buildings Colgate plans to build on the 13 city blocks they own. All this development will be equal to more than the size of Secaucus along the waterfront, with the vast sea of parked cars in front of Harborside to be replaced with still another huge project be Daniel Ludwig.

At present the rest of Jersey City is beginning to suffer from gridlocked cars fouling up the traffic like they do in Manhattan with one difference. All the buildings of midtown Manhattan are of fireproof construction so that only the contents of a building catch fire. In Jersey City we have the potential of a vast fire like the recent one in Philadelphia. We have had an excellent fire department in Jersey City because the equipment could get around fast and smother any fire before it got out of control. Then we got even more efficient equipment and closed down all our small firehouses for economic reasons so that if our new ponderous equipment gets stalled in a gridlock there are no small firehouses around with old lighter equipment to get around fast before a fire gets out of control.

Mayor Hague had a strict fire code requiring all buildings to be a masonry construction. The laws have been rescinded so that all new construction is just as flammable as the old. With thousands of Asian immigrants able to find housing in Jersey City during the past three years it's questionable if we really need more housing. The only affordable housing we can build in Jersey City will be single family manufactured houses on 25X100 ft. lots with two parking spots in front for cars. Perhaps we need more housing for cars first to cut down on gridlock and drastically whittle down the density of the waterfront pro-

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jects to the same scale as the rest of the city. The present pie-in-the sky New Port City plans will be a disaster if we have more cars spilling over into the rest of the city.

When are we ever going to put a stop on overdevelopment? Port Liberte, Colgates, Roosevelt Stadium Housing, Daniel Ludwig's project will compound things still more.

ART NOTES

Unpretentiously sequestered behind a modest storefront at 378 Palisade Avenue, is Arbisi-Buie. The proprietors, Mark Arbisi and Lauralyn Buie, of this nationally recognized business, are custom French mat specialists and picture frame consultants.

French mats represent an art that would be all but lost except for the two or three practitioners here and abroad. During the High Renaissance, hand-crafted mats were primarily used for framing prints and drawings, rather than encasings in glass. French mats developed as a high art in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in France. The styles in the shop offer a range from authentic reproductions to more moderately priced modern styles, as well as original adaptations of traditional French forms.

A French mat is meticulously hand-painted in water colors. The skill involved makes a finished mat the work of a true craftsman of the highest order. Achieving uniformity in color quality and sensibility demands the talent of an artist. Mark and Lauralyn qualify on both counts. Lauralyn has been in the framing and matting business for ten years and Mark, having completed formal studies in fine art, studied the craft of French mats under a master.

Those of us accustomed to the standard fare of commercially produced mats and frames, are deprived to a degree, of the experience of a total vision, where the entire product is the result of direct human endeavor. An original work of art reaches a higher state of completion when enclosed in a mat and frame done in the same spirit.

Arbisi-Buie is currently a wholesale enterprise, with museums, galleries, picture framing shops and art dealers as clients. Excited about the growth and change in Jersey City, especially as it pertains to the Heights, Arbisi-Buie looks optimistically towards the future, which may include a retail extension of their operation. Their mats wholesale for $35 and upwards depending on style, and retail for twice that amount. Quality has a price, but the resultant creation of human achievement cannot be undervalued.

R. S. Gerber-Kwok

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Members of the Planning and Development Committee have been busy keeping track of developments on the hill in back of Pohlman's Hall and at the old Jersey City Pickle Works on Central Avenue. On January 23rd, the committee was in the Council chambers at City Hall until midnight waiting to speak about these two issues. Unfortunately, neither case came before the Board of Adjustment that night. Both have been postposed until February 20th.

That night, the committee was able to meet informally with the developer, Frank Latinas and the architect, Fredric Rosen of Pohlman Hall and talk with them about what our residents' objections were to their scheme. The scheme, in essence is for a new development of four

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buildings containing 24 housing units, to be built on the Palisade cliff behind the houses on Ogden Avenue from the Harbor View facility to Pohlman Hall, potentially blocking the N.Y.C. view of those houses. RNA welcomed the first stage of the Pohlman development because it was a tasteful renovation of an existing structure in the neighborhood, but stage two is different. It is a totally new construction to be built precariously on the side of the hill.

The developer, Mr. Latinas is interested in gaining the community's approval of his work and has agreed to present his plans to a general meeting of RNA. Because the developer would have to re-file any revised plans with the City before our next regular meeting, we decided a special meeting would have to be called. It's to be held on Wednesday, February 5th. At that meeting, RNA will talk to the developers and then decide officially on a position for the organization to present to the Board of Adjustment on February 20th.

In regards to the other development on Central Avenue, RNA opposes the development of the ten story, 75 unit condominium complex in the presently zoned R-2 residential neighborhood. At RNA's January meeting, we voted to officially support the campaign of the Waverly Street Neighborhood Association in blocking this unrealistic project.

RANDY SANFORD

This newsletter was put together by RISA GERBER-KWOK and EDITH SPRINGER

EXHIBIT OF COURT HOUSE MURALISTS

Currently on view at the Jersey City Museum through March 15th, is "Heroes in the Fight for Beauty: The Muralists of the Hudson County Court House" exhibit. This exhibit of over one hundred drawings and photographs gives a behind-the-scenes look at the working methods of the Court House muralists as they worked to harmonize the arts of architecture, painting and sculpture in the decoration of one of the finest Beux-Arts buildings in the Northeast. The Jersey City Museum's exhibition, featuring seldom-seen photographs of the artists preparing and installing the murals, is part of a program to mark the reopening of the Hudson County Court House after a ten-year period of restoration.

Hugh Roberts designed the building in 1910, and Francis Davis Millet directed the decoration of the interior. The murals were painted by Edwin Howland Blashfield, Kenyon Cox, F.D. Millet, Charles Yardley Turner and Howard Pyle.

On March 8th, the Museum will offer a Symposium on the Court House and American Renaissance Ideals. The symposium will be held at the Court House with a reception following at the Museum. Admission is by ticket only. There is no charge for tickets but they must be reserved in advance. Reservations for tickets may be made by calling 451-0802.

Cynthia H. Sanford, one of our neighbors, is curator of the Jersey City Museum. She welcomes everybody to come and see this important exhibition , which was a year in the making.

Name and address: RNA T-SHIRT FORM PRICE: $6.00 each

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